

YOUR CULTURAL CALENDAR FOR THIS WEEK

3 TO SEE

Schedule your season – with our help

It's almost the weekend - time for the Cultural Council of Palm Beach County to share with you the best of what our community has to offer.

Each week, you get three ideas - one that's free, one that's affordable and one that's a splurge.

Your "3 to See" cultural curator is Marilyn Bauer, director of marketing and government affairs at the Cultural Council.

COMING TOMORROW: THE TO DO LIST

Your guide to weekend fun



Grammy Award-winner Bebel Gilberto will help Boca Raton celebrate Brazilian Independence Day at Brazilian Beat 2016 at Mizner Park Amphitheatre this Saturday. CONTRIBUTED BY HARPER SMITH

FREE

Brazil in Boca
Just after we say "tchau" to the Olympics in Rio, the land of many colors comes to Downtown Boca Raton for the fifth year in a row. Just three days after the country's Independence Day, multiculturalists can celebrate in style at this year's Brazilian Beat festival, featuring a full-on parade, authentic food and drinks and the musical stylings of Grammy

Award-winning bossa nova artist Bebel Gilberto. And how can one celebrate the South American beats without stylish dancers to move along to it? You'll see costumes galore during this celebration of Brazilian culture Saturday.

Brazilian Beat 2016: Saturday from 6 to 11 p.m. Mizner Park Amphitheater, 590 Plaza Real, Boca Raton. Information: 561-367-7070; www.downtownboca.org



Plan your moment of zen for this Wednesday evening at Mounts Botanical Garden of Palm Beach County in West Palm Beach. CONTRIBUTED

DEAL

Florida floral stroll
Everyone needs time to take inventory of their lives, re-adjust and find peace in the small moments that come to us so infrequently. Take the first step and surround your-

self with some of Florida's most famous features – in this case, horticulture – along the winding path of Mounts Botanical Garden in West Palm Beach. If you've been before, then visiting again for a Summer Evening Stroll this Wednes-

day is more than welcome and if it's your first time, the consider yourself lucky. For more than an hour, fans of flora are led through the site's historical gardens and can learn more about featured exotic species from the docent-led tour.

Summer Evening Stroll: Wednesday from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$10. Mounts Botanical Garden of Palm Beach County, 531 North Military Trail, West Palm Beach. Information: 561-233-1757; www.mounts.org



Show your grandparents a special day out this Sunday at the Henry Morrison Flagler Museum in Palm Beach for Grandparents Day. CONTRIBUTED.

SPLURGE

Grandparents Day
It's time to celebrate all of the matriarchs and patriarchs in our lives this weekend, and what better way to show them respect than with the time-honored tradition of visiting the Henry Morrison Flagler Museum in Palm Beach? The history of Whitehall lives within its walls, with every piece and decorative touch oozing with Gilded-Age flair – perfect for a walk with grandma and grandpa this Sunday during Grandparents Day at the museum. Don't forget to stop by Henry Flagler's railcar, a must-see for anyone visiting the historic site.

Grandparents Day: Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. Free with museum admission, which is \$18 for adults, \$10 for students 13-17 and \$3 for children 12 and under. Henry Morrison Flagler Museum, 1 Whitehall Way, Palm Beach. Information: 561-655-2833; www.flaglermuseum.us.

Mission

continued from D1

and skip the party he threw for his staff.

The courtroom's size limited the number of defendants the prosecutors could try. "There were hundreds of people responsible," he says. "How many were put on trial? Practically none."

After the trials, Ferencz fought for restitution for thousands of World War II victims, and argued for the creation of the International Criminal Court, which entered into force in 2002, headquartered in The Hague.

"My hope is that people will not be content to look at the past and say never again, and then do nothing," he says. "So I am taking the measures for preventing it from ever happening again."

That's the purpose of his \$1 million donation to the Holocaust Museum for the Ferencz International Justice Initiative. The annual gift is renewable for up to \$10 million.

Where did he get the money? He saved what he earned from his salary and cases unrelated to war victims. And he appears to have saved almost every dollar.

His retirement community in Delray Beach, Kings Point, a place he does not care for, resembles a 1970s military barracks capped with glazed pink Spanish tile roofs. His home, which he purchased 40 years ago for less than \$23,000, is decorated with budget furniture that offers little comfort. Personal flourishes are few. It looks like he moved in yesterday.

"Law not war, that's my motto. Simple. Three words," he says. "It causes me pain to see the world as it is. But not to do anything, not to try, that would be a wrong."

As a private who rose to the rank of sergeant in Gen. George Patton's 3rd Army, Ferencz was present at, or

arrived days after, the liberation of several concentration camps: Buchenwald, Mauthausen, Flossenburg, Ebensee.

"The story is basically the same for every camp," he says. "Inmates being worked to death at every camp. Conditions absolutely horrible and indescribable, unforgettable. Guards fleeing."

Ferencz has shared his stories for seven decades. "I saw the inmates beat up a guy they captured and burn him alive," Ferencz says of a German guard. "Slowly. I saw it."

He stops. His eyes pool with tears, and a linen handkerchief emerges from his pin-striped pocket.

"Excuse me," he says, "but I still see it. Could I have probably stopped it? No. Did I try? No. Should I have tried? No. You try being there."

Ferencz spends his days in a narrow office overlooking a man-made lagoon and a flock of white ibises. At his desk, crafted from a slab of plywood supported by filing cabinets, he curses the computer for failing to obey his commands. "It must be an anti-Semite," he says.

A New Yorker most of his life, Ferencz has another home in New Rochelle, where he raised four children. He has lived long enough to see them retire.

Ferencz is here, in the punishing late summer heat and humidity, only because Gertrude, his wife of 70 years, is in failing health and prefers Florida. Her problem? "She's old!"

He lived simply, invested wisely and sat on those investments for decades. "I don't gamble. I like plain food," he says, pulling at his navy slippers. "I like simple things." The slippers he's wearing, purchased for \$5, are his fancy pair. A copy of the Kama Sutra winks from a bookshelf thick with tomes on international criminal law. He's a bit of a flirt. His indulgence is talk. For four hours he talks.

"I came into the world a

poor boy. I want to go out of this world a poor boy," he says. "My resolve is to give it all back in gratitude for the opportunity I've had in the United States. I have been trying with my life, ever since I can remember, to try and create a more peaceful and humane world. And I want the money to go for that purpose. I realize it will not happen in my lifetime, because I'm trying to reverse thousands of years of tradition and glorification of war."

"The recipient of Ferencz's largesse is the Holocaust Museum's Simon-Skjoldt Center for the Prevention of Genocide. "We're planning to make sure the fight he has waged his whole life continues after he is gone. Ben has seen absolutely the worst of humanity," says Cameron Hudson, director of the center. "He's seen it up close, and to have this kind of faith in humanity, that we can overcome our most base impulses, is amazing."

Ferencz has lived to see many more atrocities – Rwanda, Sudan, Syria. Still, he believes "we can reverse the glorification of war. We can change hearts and minds, and hold individuals accountable."

He remains frustrated that despots and terrorists are killed instead of tried in criminal courts to deter further aggression. He would have brought Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden to trial in international court.

But he is also optimistic about civilization's advances. "I have also lived through unbelievable change, that a woman is running for president, or that a man can marry a man – enormous, inconceivable transformations in my lifetime," he says.

This is how Ferencz speaks, alternating between speeches about global peace and what he calls "Benny stories," tales worthy of Sholem Aleichem if Aleichem had been raised in a Hell's Kitchen cellar and gone to Harvard Law.

The family moved to the United States when Ben was 10 months old. Ferencz's father was a janitor who graduated to house painting. His parents were in an arranged family marriage – they were cousins – and later divorced. Crime was the neighborhood's chief industry. An uncle told him, "You'll either be a good lawyer or a good crook." Ferencz attended City College, where bright immigrants went free in the 1930s. "I didn't know any lawyers. I wanted to go to the best school," he says.

Someone mentioned Harvard. OK, Ferencz said, Harvard it is.

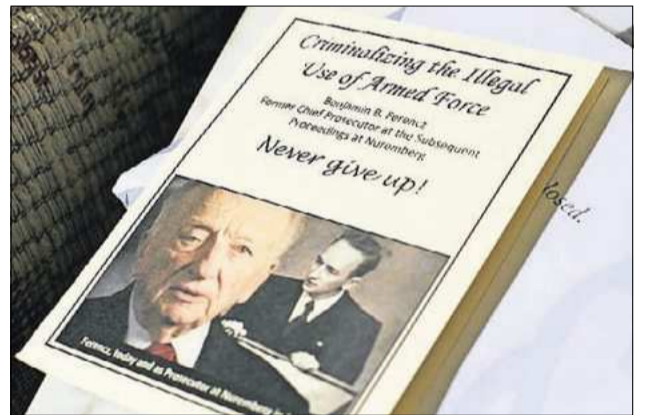
He wanted the best as insurance and protection, he says, to command respect. "Because I was very short. I was very small. Five-foot-two at the height of my height," he says. "It kept me out of the Air Force. I wanted to be a pilot. I couldn't reach the pedals. But, by chance, I had a very good education."

Harvard, where he began his lifelong study of war crimes, got him to Nuremberg, but not before he served as a grunt in Patton's army.

He enlisted. "In their typical brilliance, being a Harvard Law School graduate and an expert on war crimes, they assigned me to clean the latrines in the artillery and do every other filthy thing they could give me," he says. "Why? Because I was a Harvard man. I was never high and mighty. They didn't care. They were a bunch of idiots."

His low rank had its privileges. On bathtub duty, he claims, he saw Marlene Dietrich naked. As a member of Patton's forces, he was at Normandy, broke through the Maginot and Siegfried lines, crossed the Rhine at Remagen, and took part in the Battle of the Bulge at Bastogne.

He was awarded five battle stars, though not, he argues, for bravery. "I was hiding under whatever truck or tank I could get under," he says. "My weapon was a typewriter."



After the war, Benjamin Ferencz wrote books on international law and pushed for an international criminal court. PHOTO BY RYAN STONE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

After his return to the States and Gertrude, Ferencz was recruited for Nuremberg. Telford Taylor, his eventual boss, noted that his Army files indicated that he was occasionally insubordinate.

"That's not correct, sir. I am not occasionally insubordinate," Ferencz told his future law partner. "I am usually insubordinate. I don't take orders that I know are stupid or illegal."

After Nuremberg, Ferencz worked for years seeking restitution for individuals and organizations. "I was known as a lawyer who takes hopeless but morally well-founded cases on a contingency basis," he says. He wrote books on international law. The Vietnam War disgusted him – "crazy and should be illegal," he says. He quit his law practice to dedicate himself to peace.

"It's possible to take the most fundamental, strongly held ideas and change them. What makes people change? Sometimes fear, sometimes reason, sometimes sentiment," he says. "You have to teach people to be more tolerant, to be more compassionate, to compromise. It takes courage. Crimes are committed by individuals, not movements, and you have to hold the people responsible in courts."

Ferencz has lived long enough to participate in the first case before the Interna-

tional Criminal Court. At age 91, he gave a closing statement in the prosecution of Congolese warlord Thomas Lubanga Dylilo in Uganda. But he is far from satisfied and has railed at senators and former Cabinet members, urging more aggressive prosecution of war criminals.

Ferencz has been awarded a trove of medals, including the French Legion of Honor, Germany's military medal of honor and Holland's Erasmus Prize. He doesn't want to see the Holocaust Museum "just be a historical archive. It has to do something, to build on the suffering to avoid any in the future." In pursuit of peace and more teaching of international criminal law, he is working with Harvard and Cardozo law schools.

Next year marks the 70th anniversary of the Einsatzgruppen trial at Nuremberg. The last remaining prosecutor could be excused for watching a baseball game or two, or reading a mystery.

Ferencz does none of that. He performs 100 push-ups each morning, swims in his retirement community pool, cares for Gertrude at night. Otherwise, he works at his makeshift desk, cursing the computer.

Fun? Ferencz has no time for fun.

"I am too busy," he says, "trying to save the world."